



LOVE  
Moods  
Helyne  
STEWART

CONTEMPORARY  MONO M3601

PRODUCED BY CONTEMPORARY RECORDS, INC.



# Helyne Stewart: "Love Moods"

ACCOMPANIED BY TEDDY EDWARDS' QUARTET & SEPTET

IT HAS OFTEN BEEN THE CUSTOM, in the baser regions of the land of journalese, to submit popular singers to a variety of ornithological comparisons. Sopranos and contraltos, jazz singers and pop singers, all have been likened at one time or another, and with varying degrees of inaccuracy, to nightingales, thrushes, canaries, or larks.

Helyne Stewart, at first hearing, evoked for me none of these images, but rather an impression that suggests cool spring water. In an ascending phrase, such as those heard toward the end of *Easy To Love*, it is as though she were obeying Lord Tennyson's invocation: "Let their voice rise like a fountain for me night and day." This is an admirable characteristic to find in any singer, and it is good to welcome her in her first album as a soloist.

Helyne, who pronounces it *He-leen*, was brought to the attention of Contemporary by Teddy Edwards, a few months after she moved out to California in May of 1960 and settled in Los Angeles. As the maturity of her work here might indicate, by this time she had had extensive professional experience.

Born in East St. Louis, Illinois, Helyne began singing when she was too young to be conscious of any music except what she heard on Sunday mornings. "My mother and father sang in South Mission Baptist Church. Later, when I was at high school, five of us formed an *a cappella* choir, and we started singing popular songs." In a higher grade at the school (Lincoln High) was another youngster with an interest in music, a dentist's son who played in the high school band; his name was Miles Davis.

It was through one of the teachers in Lincoln High that Helyne and her schoolmates were launched into show business. One girl dropped out of the group; another girl, with Helyne and two boys, started taking professional jobs arranged by the teacher in St. Louis. Later, during a school vacation, they took an engagement at El Grotto in Chicago's Pershing Hotel, working under the name of The Caldwells.

Helyne names Ethel Waters as the first popular singer who made a deep impression on her. Though in due course she observed the work of others who stirred her emotions—Ella Fitzgerald, Herb Jeffries, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday and even Private Cecil Gant of *I Wonder* fame—it was too early for her to reveal what effect, if any, these listening experiences had had on her. In fact, it was almost too early to hear her at all, since she sang mostly harmony parts with the group. ("I didn't read music, though, and still can't—I just figured out which notes sounded right.")

Joe Glaser, head of the New York-based booking agency, heard the Caldwells in Chicago, as a result of which they went to New York for the first time in 1945. During the next few years the unit enjoyed fairly consistent popularity, playing all over the U.S. and Canada. "Bojangles Robinson heard us once, and wanted to take us overseas in a show with him," Helyne recalls, "but the deal fell through, and we lost our only chance to go to Europe."

Using her not inconsiderable natural ear and harmonic sense, Helyne played bass and guitar from time to time in the group. The Caldwells provided further educational opportunities for her in the accompanying piano work, for Ahmad Jamal was on the road with them for a year and a half, and he was followed by Ray Bryant.

## Side 1

LOVE IS HERE TO STAY by George & Ira Gershwin. (Chappell & Co., Inc. ASCAP. Time: 3.22.)

I HADN'T ANYONE TILL YOU by Ray Noble. (ABC Music Corp. ASCAP. Time: 2.50.)

MY HEART BELONGS TO DADDY by Cole Porter. (Chappell & Co. Inc. ASCAP. Time: 2.04.)

THAT OLD FEELING by Sammy Fain & Lew Brown. (Leo Feist Inc. ASCAP. Time: 3.01.)

THIS LOVE OF MINE by Sol Parker, Henry W. Sanicola & Frank Sinatra. (Embassy Music Corp. BMI. Time: 3.48.)

THE MAN I LOVE by George & Ira Gershwin. (New World Music Corp. ASCAP. Time: 3.11.)

## Side 2

WHY DON'T YOU DO RIGHT by Joe McCoy. (Mayfair Music Corp. ASCAP. Time: 2.56.)

HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN (HOW HIGH IS THE SKY) by Irving Berlin. (Irving Berlin Music Corp. ASCAP. Time: 3.25.)

EASY TO LOVE by Cole Porter. (Chappell & Co., Inc. ASCAP. Time: 3.35.)

BESAME MUCHO by Sunny Skylar & Consuelo Velasquez. (Peer International Corp. BMI. Time: 3.24.)

MY SILENT LOVE by Dana Suesse & Edward Heyman. (Famous Music Corp. ASCAP. Time: 3.05.)

THIS CAN'T BE LOVE by Richard Rodgers & Lorenz Hart. (Chappell & Co. Inc. ASCAP. Time: 2:13.)

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Love is Here to Stay, The Man I Love, How Deep is the Ocean, My Silent Love were recorded January 20, 1961 with TEDDY EDWARDS, tenor sax; JACK SHELDON, trumpet; FRANK ROSOLINO, trombone; ART PEPPER, alto sax; PETE JOLLY, piano; JIMMY BOND, bass; FRANK BUTLER, drums.

The remaining selections were recorded August 21 & 22, 1961 with TEDDY EDWARDS, tenor sax; PHINEAS NEWBORN, JR., piano; LEROY VINNEGAR, bass; MILT TURNER, drums.

Recorded at Contemporary Records in Los Angeles. Sound by Roy DuNann & Howard Holzer. Produced by Lester Koenig.

After traveling with the combo until 1953, working frequently around the East and recording with them for RCA Victor, Helyne joined Nat Towles' Quintet, touring in Arizona and Texas in 1954.

"We went to Billings, Montana in January of 1957, and I stayed there more than three years. During the last year the group was taken over by the trumpet player, 'Papa T.' Holder."

Not long after her move to the West Coast Helyne landed a solo gig at the Zanzibar in Santa Monica and stayed there several months, through the spring of 1961. Most recently she

has been jobbing around the Los Angeles area with a nine-piece band known as The Jeepsters.

Teddy Edwards was working at the Intermission Room in Los Angeles when Helyne came in and made a spontaneous guest appearance. "I brought her to Contemporary soon after that," says Teddy. "I liked Helyne's sound from the first time I heard her. Later on we worked a concert together and I found that she not only has a style of her own, but also works very well in front of a concert audience. I think she's going to develop into a very important singer."

FOR THE FIRST DATE, with the four-horns-and-rhythm instrumentation, Teddy wrote simple, uncluttered arrangements that provided his protégée with a comfortable setting. On the second date, with Teddy, Phineas Newborn, Jr. and rhythm, the routines were mainly worked out in the studio.

One of the most vigorously impressive items in this set, the twenty-year-old *Why Don't You Do Right*, has nostalgic overtones for Helyne. "Lil Green was on the same show with me when I was just starting in show business, at El Grotto in Chicago," she says. "Lil didn't write the song, but it was her record that originally made it popular; later on Peggy Lee had a hit singing it with Benny Goodman's band." Helyne achieves just the right laconic spirit of the lyrics in this new treatment of the minor-mode twelve-bar blues.

Among orchestral numbers, *Love Is Here To Stay* stands out, not only for Helyne's two opening choruses but for the solos by Jack Sheldon and Teddy. *The Man I Love*, taken in long meter, offers a flash of Art Pepper's volatile alto. An unobtrusively pretty arrangement sets off the calm purity of Helyne's high notes in *My Silent Love*; Teddy's scoring and Helyne's straight forward ballad interpretation are well coupled in the 1932 Berlin standard *How Deep is the Ocean*.

Of the others, it must be said that the rhythm team of Phineas, Leroy Vinnegar and Milt Turner furnishes a strenuous and valuable undercurrent on such rhythmically-grounded items as *My Heart Belongs To Daddy*. The opening and closing idea on this was Teddy's. The solo passages by Phineas (notably on *This Can't Be Love*) may stir in the listener a desire to hear him at greater length; this need is brilliantly filled in his first Contemporary album, *Phineas Newborn Jr., A World of Piano!* (M3600, stereo S7600).

Helyne Stewart, as Teddy Edwards has pointed out, is a singer whose future, though as unpredictable as any future that has to contend with the vagaries of show business, certainly deserves to be as bright and clear and well-sustained as those handsome high tones she reaches. At all times she seems to be sufficiently well in command of the situation to be able to phrase and vary the melodies according to the dictates of her mood and imagination. These are significant attributes, and on her maiden solo sides she has put them effectively to work.

By LEONARD FEATHER  
December 5, 1961

Leonard Feather, author of *The New Encyclopedia of Jazz* (Horizon Press, New York), is a composer as well as a leading jazz musicologist, historian, and critic. His *Blindfold Test* has been a Down Beat feature for many years.

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CONTEMPORARY M3601  
MONOPHONIC



CONTEMPORARY  
RECORDS

1. LOVE IS HERE TO STAY

by GEORGE & IRA GERSHWIN

2. I HADN'T ANYONE TILL YOU

by RAY NOBLE

3. MY HEART BELONGS TO DADDY

by COLE PORTER

4. THAT OLD FEELING

by SAMMY FAIN & LEW BROWN

M3601  
(LKL 12-359)

Side 1

5. THIS LOVE OF MINE

by S. PARKER, HENRY SANICOLA & FRANK SINATRA

6. THE MAN I LOVE

by GEORGE & IRA GERSHWIN

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